

Poetry.

THE SILVER PLATE.

They passed it along from pew to pew,
And gathered the coins, now fast, now few,
That rattled upon it; and every time
Some eager fingers would drop a dime
On the silver plate, with a silver sound,
A boy who sat in the aisle looked round
With a wistful face—"Oh, if only he
Had a dime to offer, how glad he'd be!"
He fumbled his pockets, but didn't dare
To hope he should find a penny there.

He had listened with wide-set, earnest eyes
As the minister, in a plaintive wise,
Had spoken of children all abroad
The world who had never heard of God—
Poor, pitiful pagans, who didn't know
When they came to die, where their souls would
go,

And who shrieked with fear when their mother
made
Them kneel to an idol god, afraid
He might eat them up, so fierce, and wild,
And horrid he seemed to the frightened child.

And the more the minister talked, the more
The boy's heart ached in the inner core;
And the nearer to him the silver plate
Kept coming, the harder seemed his fate
That he hadn't a penny (had that sufficed)
To give, that the heathen might hear of Christ.
As they offered the piled-up plate to him
He blushed, and his eyes began to swim.

Then, bravely turning, as if he knew
There was nothing better that he could do,
He spoke in a voice that held a tear—
"Put the plate on the bench beside me here."
And the plate was placed; for they thought he
meant

To empty his pockets of every cent.
But he stood straight up, and he softly put
Right square in the midst of the plate his foot,
And said with a sob, controlled before,
"I will give myself; I have nothing more."

—Margaret J. Preston.

Contributions.

CALIFORNIA.

H. M. LIGHTY.

Rev. S. J. Harrison as editor of the EVANGELIST about three years ago editorially discussed the growth of our church in connection with the colony or settlement plan. He called our attention to the fact wherever our people have settled in communities there resulted strong congregations and wherever they have scattered with few exceptions is anything heard of them. He said:

"This was the secret of the growth of the church under the administration of our forefathers. The pioneers sought out good country and then with unflinching fidelity to their faith they encouraged others to settle with them, and in a few years became not only a strong congregation themselves but the seed of many others contiguous thereto.

But it is important to find a good coun-

try. It is a trite saying that "land that will not produce good wheat is too poor to raise Dunkards from." Our people inherit a propensity for general prosperity and they will not be contented unless they meet with fair success. In this respect we believe California will succeed. It is a country of unmeasured possibilities. Those who have been thinking, as we did, that the country is already made, and that the "ground floor" is occupied are very much mistaken. There has been only enough done to show what wonderful things are possible. While the climate and the fruit are the items usually relied upon to win immigrants, there are evidently as great opportunities for material and intellectual prosperity as any where else.

Brother Harrison then had but slight acquaintance with the country. Our brethren of Lathrop and Ripon, California are at present citing us to, but this is a wheat and barley country. They have just harvested one of the heaviest crops for years. Some of the land in the immediate vicinity that is proposed for the coming diversified farming colony is expected to yield as much as 55 bushels of wheat to the acre. This large yield is the result of plenty of rain, and tells in a demonstrative way, what may be expected from this soil when once brought fully under irrigation.

Brother Josiah Keim makes us think that the college debt will be paid. I feel it will and am already commencing to wonder how the event will be celebrated. I would propose that the great effort to this grand consummation be made in the next 30 days and that not less than 10 days prior to the Ashland (Warsaw Ed.) '96 convention, which I believe meets Aug. 27, the announcement will be sent forth that the convention shall close with a *grand college jubilee*. At which meeting all alumni and former students are solicited to be present to meet the present students, faculty and trustees of the college. That with appropriate ceremony and a fitting celebration in the presence of all interested in our cherished school, a bonfire be made and all notes, mortgages and trust deeds against the college property legally and properly cancelled PAID will be cremated.

One brother whom I have personally solicited to take an interest in this matter writes me. "We must raise this money, yet many of our brethren have given before to this cause, and I do not know how they will take to it." I make no reply as I felt that the "we must raise this money" would mean that that particular congregation would come up with its due proportion, no matter how some who have

paid before will "take to it." But in a general way may I try to meet this "excuse" which is so often offered. Suppose you have given \$10, \$25 or even \$100 to the college, was that not 10 years ago? That would be \$1, \$2.50 or perhaps \$10 a year. We must not expect anything else but that our educational cause will need constant contributions and every member of the Brethren church according to his or her ability ought to contribute to this cause from \$1 to \$10 every year. So come now. Don't figure it out that this righteous work of the Lord can in some way be settled up and squared off once for all for our lives. If we are a live, progressive people, the wants of our school, our churches, our missions are constantly increasing and we are not doing our whole duty if we do not meet these requirements. Brethren, how are you getting along? Has one half of the remaining \$5000 been secured since Brother Keim's report?

Wray, Colo.

MUSIC IN OUR CHURCHES.—No. 4.

J. M. BOWMAN.

It has always been a mystery to me how so many people can engage in the service of song in the church and Sunday-school without having the least conception of what they are singing—that is they do not seem to feel the importance of the work in which they are engaged, but drive through the service in a dry, dull, mechanical sort of way and yet feel satisfied with what they have done. They do not seem to realize that there is a higher ideal for the singer to look to than merely singing through the piece in a careless, indifferent way, and paying no heed whatever to expressing the sentiment of both words and music, and yet they enjoy a feeling of satisfaction in performing what they consider a religious duty. It is quite true that the engaging in sacred song service is a sacred duty, but at the same time we should be made to feel the responsibility resting upon us, and try to make that portion of the divine service as near perfect as possible. We all admire a good sermon, or prayer, and we expect our ministers to be well enough qualified for the positions they occupy, then why should not the singer strive to attain that degree of eminence, so that he may do as good work as the minister. For is not the musical part of divine service as important as the rest? I do not mean to say that all singers are careless and indifferent, for we have many good singers who are conscientious, and earnest in their endeavors to make the service attractive, beneficial and enlightening in its character, but there is a large number,